

ABM

U.S. Data Indicate Moscow Is Slowing ICBM Deployment

By WILLIAM BEECHER

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Dec. 16 — American reconnaissance satellites have picked up evidence that the Soviet Union has slowed the construction of long-range strategic nuclear missiles and is dismantling a modest number of intermediate-range missiles.

Senior Administration analysts are uncertain whether these two developments are motivated primarily by military or economic considerations or by a desire by Moscow to influence the talks with the United States on the limitation of strategic arms. Negotiators for the two nations wound up the Helsinki phase of those discussions today and prepared to adjourn on Friday with the issuance of a brief communiqué. [Page 3.]

Jerry W. Friedheim, a Defense Department spokesman, disclosed today that the Russians appeared to have slowed the deployment of their giant SS-9 intercontinental missiles, the weapons that American planners fear would pose the

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greatest potential threat in the event of a surprise attack on United States land-based missiles.

Other officials said that the Russians appeared to be dismantling some older intermediate-range missiles among approximately 70 weapons deployed in the Asian part of the Soviet Union. These weapons, while believed to be primarily aimed at Communist China and Japan, could hit military bases in Alaska as well.

In a statement that he said had been authorized by Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird, Mr. Friedheim said that some analysts believed the Russians were "approaching what might be called leveling-off phases" in their missile programs.

Specifically, he said, "preliminary indications" suggested that the Soviet Union had started slowing its SS-9 construction and might now have "somewhat fewer than 300 SS-9's operational or under construction."

Slower Deployment Seen

Mr. Friedheim said the Pentagon statement was in response to questions about recent published reports that the Russians were slowing their SS-9 program.

Last year at this time, intelligence information indicated that the Soviet Union had about 280 SS-9's. The pace in recent years appears to have been to build about 50 to 60 a year. The new estimate, which conflicts with the estimate of "more than 300" Mr. Laird has talked of in recent months, seems to indicate a reduced deployment effort.

Qualified sources explained that the Russians had apparently stopped construction work already at a small number of SS-9 sites, leading to the reduced estimate.

Mr. Friedheim offered two cautionary comments, however.

"I want to point out that there have been previous years of low activity in the SS-9 construction program, followed by years of increased activity," he said. "We cannot yet tell exactly where the Soviet's SS-9 force level will come out after this year."

He also spoke of an accelerated Soviet program of testing multiple warheads for the SS-9 and smaller SS-11 missiles and raised the possibility that the Russians might have slowed deployments of new missiles so as to replace some of their earlier weapons with new ones containing multiple warheads.

The United States is now replacing about 500 Minuteman-1 intercontinental missiles with Minuteman-3 missiles carrying three-part warheads and is replacing 496 submarine-borne Polaris missiles with Poseidon missiles carrying 10 to 14 warheads each.

Mr. Friedheim said the Russians now had more than 2,500 land-based intercontinental missiles in place or under construction, compared with 1,054 American ICBM's.

Old Weapons Retired by U.S.

The United States has consistently retired old weapons as modern replacements have been developed. But, until now, the Soviet pattern apparently has been to keep adding newer ones to the old.

The Soviet Union's intercontinental missiles have ranges of 8,500 to about 8,000 miles. Its intermediate missiles have ranges of 1,200 to 3,500 miles.

One school of analysts here feels that the slowing of the ICBM program and the limited dismantling of intermediate missiles may represent the first sign that Soviet leaders have concluded they are approaching the point of having enough nuclear weapons and may therefore genuinely be prepared to agree with the United States to an over-all freeze on weapons.

American experts, it is said, have long expected the Russians to reach such a point and so to start to retire some of the older, less efficient, less well-protected and costly-to-operate systems.

"There comes a point," one official suggested, "where even for the Russians inefficient old systems must be retired if they are to free funds for the consumer side of the economy."

So far no dismantling has been discussed in the European part of the Soviet Union, where the Russians reportedly have the bulk of their 700 to 800 intermediate-range missiles. On the contrary, it is said, the Russians have been installing for about a year approximately 100 SS-11 intercontinental missiles in complexes in the southwest that have previously contained nothing beyond intermediate-range weapons.

Another group of analysts, on the basis of the same reconnaissance-satellite data, is concerned that the limited dismantling may be motivated by a Soviet desire to strengthen an argument their negotiators have been making in Helsinki. If this is the case, the analysts say, it could signal a tougher Soviet stance that could dim the prospects of ultimate agreement.

Their reasoning focuses on the fact that the missiles reportedly being dismantled in Soviet Asia have a range sufficient to reach targets in Alaska.

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Peking Said to Deploy Atomic Missiles

By WILLIAM BEECHER
 Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Nov. 22 —

Senior Government analysts believe that Communist China has deployed a few medium-range nuclear-tipped missiles and is preparing for more widespread deployment of missiles capable of reaching the heart of the Soviet Union.

So far, well-placed sources say, a small number of missiles with a range of 600 to 1,000 miles have been installed at some long-active test-launch sites. These apparently are kept in readiness against the unlikely possibility that the hot-and-cold border conflict with the Soviet Union might suddenly erupt into full-scale war.

But some key analysts believe that the Chinese leaders instead of emplacing substantial numbers of such medium-range missiles at operational sites along their borders, are concentrating their efforts on installation of an advanced missile with a range of 1,500 to 2,500 miles.

With such a capability, Peking might feel it could better deter a Soviet attack, since it would potentially have the means of destroying large population centers in European areas of the Soviet Union in retaliation.

Second-Strike Capability

The United States and the Soviet Union currently base their mutual deterrence on such a second-strike, retaliatory capability.

Intelligence officials have been expecting extensive deployment of Chinese medium-range missiles ever since 1967 when well over a dozen test firings were observed. Except

for the recent discovery of a few such missiles kept in readiness at test-launch pads, however, no broad deployment has been discerned.

Nonetheless, ranking officials are privately citing various pieces of fragmentary evidence to support their view that Peking is moving toward perfecting and deploying an advanced missile.

They believe that the 381-pound space satellite launched by China in April was lofted by a multistage booster, the first stage of which was an intermediate-range missile capable of being fired at least 1,500 miles.

It was discovered recently that the Chinese have a new launching complex in Manchuria from which they could test-fire a missile more than 2,000 miles into western Sinkiang Province.

Activity has been reported at the new site suggesting that such tests will get under way soon.

Data on Firings Re-examined

Until China's satellite launching, intelligence analysts believed that the scores of liquid-fuel missile firings carried out over the last few years were only of medium-range missiles. The firings were generally of 400 to 600 miles.

But analysis of the type of booster needed to launch the heavy Chinese space satellite, together with re-analysis of data on previous missile firings, has persuaded technical experts that the Chinese have interspersed tests of intermediate-range missiles, at less than full range, among those of medium-range missiles.

Officials here also have said that since the start of the Chinese nuclear weapons program in the early nineteen-sixties,

the Chinese have worked on a wide range of possible missile-delivery systems, with a view to deciding the ones on which to concentrate their limited resources later on.

"Our impression," said one analyst, "is that this 'later on' has arrived."

In the missile field, the Chinese appear to have three basic choices.

The first, it is said, is a medium-range missile of 600 to 1,000 miles that could reach Soviet military targets along the frontier and American military bases in Japan, as well as various cities of other countries along the Chinese periphery.

The second choice, it is reported, is an intermediate-range missile of 1,500 to 2,500 miles that could reach into the Soviet heartland.

Few of Soviet Seen on Key

The third choice is said to be an intercontinental missile with a range of 6,000 miles or more that could reach targets in the United States as well as throughout the Soviet Union.

"Given the priority that we believe they place on the Russian threat," one official said, "we think it reasonable to assume they will decide, or have already decided, to stress intermediate-range missiles."

Several officials pointed out that a decision in favor of missiles with a range of 1,500 to 2,000 miles would not preclude China's developing and deploying a full arsenal of different missiles when she feels she can afford it.

American experts believe that while China is capable of deploying a small number of medium- or intermediate-range missiles very soon, it would probably take her about five years to develop a force of 80 to 100.

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Soviet Reported Testing MIRV Missile System

The Soviet Union has developed a true MIRV—multiple, independently targetable re-entry vehicle—system for its big SS9 missile, according to informed sources.

Tests conducted in recent weeks have convinced knowledgeable American experts that the MIRV has been flown successfully. They believe it probably will be tested full range into the Pacific before the end of this month.

U.S. military strategists have for several years figured on Soviet capability to deploy a MIRV system by 1972. The recent tests indicate the Russians are about on schedule.

U.S. Ahead

They are about a year and a half behind comparable U.S. development. A much smaller MIRV is now being deployed on Minuteman III missiles at Minot Air Force Base, N.D.

In developing their MIRV, the Soviets have gone beyond the relatively simple multiple warhead system they have demonstrated in a series of tests into the Pacific over the last two years.

That system, the MRV—multiple re-entry vehicle—permits the deployment of three warheads in a string or shotgun fashion but apparently does not permit the warheads to be

aimed with precision at separate targets.

To move from the MRV to the MIRV, the Soviets had to solve two problems. First, they had to be able to change the direction as well as the range of the warheads. Second, they had to get a sufficient spread—at least 15 to 20 miles—to cover widespread targets.

Performance Increased

They are now believed to have solved both problems and, in fact, have achieved a considerably better spread than the minimum 15 to 20 miles.

Earlier tests stimulated a controversy among experts in the U.S. government over whether or not the Soviet system provided the ability to pinpoint specific targets. That controversy has been resolved by recent tests, it is reported.

The Soviet SS-9 equipped with a true MIRV has been cited frequently by American officials as a serious potential threat to the U.S. land-based force of 1,000 Minuteman missiles. Each SS-9 would be capable, theoretically, of destroying three Minutemen with its three 5-megaton warheads.

The Russians now have more than 300 SS-9s deployed or under construction, according to the latest official U.S. estimate, and are building at the rate of about 50 a year.

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THE WASHINGTON POST

Russia Perfecting MIRV, Tests Hint

By George C. Wilson
Washington Post Staff Writer

Latest Soviet tests indicate that Moscow is well on the way to perfecting the multi-headed MIRV missile, informed officials said yesterday.

The evidence, though still fragmentary, has touched off a behind-the-scenes debate within the Nixon administration about the seriousness of the Soviet MIRV threat.

The outcome of this debate will influence the American position at the SALT talks and the future of President Nixon's anti-ballistic missile (ABM) defense.

MIRV is the technique of packing several H-bombs on one missile and sending each of the bombs to a different target; or all the warheads can

gang up on one target for greater destructive power.

Until now, the Soviet Union has displayed only the MRV technique of sending three individual H-bombs aboard rocket into the same general area — not to different targets. MRV stands for multiple re-entry vehicle and MIRV for multiple independently targetable re-entry vehicle.

Some arms control specialists argue that once both sides deploy highly accurate MIRV missiles, there will be greater temptation to strike first rather than risk having ICBMs destroyed on the ground by MIRV.

The United States already has the MIRV weapon on the line—the Minuteman 3 ICBM.

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MIRV, From A1

But the Pentagon argues Minuteman 3 is not accurate and powerful enough to knock out the Soviet ICBMs in a surprise strike. Defense officials therefore insist that Minuteman 3 fits in with the American policy of "second strike"—firing only after being fired upon.

But a Soviet MIRV could be more menacing than its American counterpart. The reason is that the big Soviet ICBM known as the SS-9 can lift a much heavier load of H-bombs than the American Minuteman 3.

The Pentagon estimates that the SS-9 can carry three H-bombs of five megatons each—an explosive power 30 times greater than that of the H-bombs in the nose of Minuteman 3.

If the SS-9 were to combine this type of destructive power with the accuracy achieved by the lighter Minuteman 3, Russia would indeed have a "first strike" type weapon at its disposal—one that could destroy American missiles buried underground.

Just how close Russia is to such a weapon is what the debate is all about. Pentagon spokesmen will not even confirm that Russia has started its latest announced round of missile tests in the Pacific, far less what Western observation techniques have detected.

This latest Western tracking has revealed Soviet missiles with more maneuverability and quicker release of the individual warheads—fundamental to the American-style MIRV.

The idea is to program the

carrier rocket to start maneuvering shortly after launch and release the warheads at different points along the flight path. The quicker the release, the more time the warheads have to spread apart as they fly toward their targets.

Conservative estimates are that these new "anomalies"—as some officials term the Russian rocket maneuvers—do not mean that the Soviet Union is about to close its "MIRV gap" with the United States. The evidence is not hard enough.

However, Pentagon planners often assume the worst when recommending weaponry to counter the Soviet threat. Thus, these new Soviet missile tests could prove highly significant in the debate on how much is enough for defense.

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Soviets Testing Anti-Satellite Rocket

by George C. Wilson
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Russians have returned using a rocket system apparently designed to inspect possibly destroy another's satellites—just in case should move to outer

theory is that the Russians want to take out insur-

ance against U.S. development of a bomb-in-orbit system—a technique the Soviet Union has approached in previous rocket test flights.

Another thesis is that, for wartime, Russia wants a way to destroy American observation and navigation satellites—the space gadgetry for keeping track of Soviet military movements and for guiding U.S. Polaris submarines.

The Pentagon is saying very little about the experiment. But the Soviet announcements and U.S. radar tracking of the Soviet vehicles tell quite a bit.

They show that three space-ships went up from the Soviet military spaceport of Tyuratam between Oct. 20 and Oct. 30. They rode into orbit on the SS-9 Scarp rocket—the same one Defense Secretary Melvin R. Laird has said could send three five-megaton H-bombs down on American ICBM sites.

Once in orbit, the space-ships—as indicated by the radar tracks—engaged in a complicated marksmanship exercise.

Cosmos 373, launched Oct. 20, shot almost 700 miles out into space and went into a racetrack-shaped orbit around the earth. It soon settled into a circular orbit, by moving downward, about 300 miles above the earth.

That first satellite apparently was the target. The hunters were launched next from Tyuratam—on Oct. 23 and Oct. 30. They were announced by the Russians as Cosmos 374 and 375.

The hunters maneuvered themselves out into an elliptical course about 1,300 miles away from the earth at its farthest point and about 300 miles at its closest.

That put them on an intercept course with the target satellite at their lowest points.

In a regular mission, as opposed to this test, the hunter satellites presumably could send pictures of the target satellite back to Soviet ground commanders, who could then decide what to do next—including whether to destroy the target under inspection.

In this test, as in an earlier one that began Oct. 19, 1968, both hunter satellites presumably were blown up after they made their inspection pass—either from a charge inside them or from being shot at by the target satellite. Charges inside the hunter also could be designed to destroy the satellite inspected.

Why the Russians chose to conduct a re-run of the hunter-killer exercise last month, just before resumption of strategic arms talks with the United States, is unknown.

The U.S. Air Force had satellite inspection (nicknamed SAINT) and killer (BAMBI)

programs under development in the 1950s, but they have since been cancelled.

The Pentagon has downgraded outer-space weapons such as bombs in orbit, on the theory that earth is still the better launching site. The U.S. military space effort is concentrated instead on satellites for observing, communicating and navigating.